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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BROOKLYN DECORATOR.

HERE is no city in the country making more rapid strides in the erection of new buildings, or in the novel decoration of same, than the city of Brooklyn. The vicinity of Prospect Park is being covered with detached mansions, which have the advantage of a site second to none in the United States. The decorator is following closely in the wake of the architect, and already several decorators of note have established new stores on the various avenues that mount the slope of Prospect Hill. One of the most progressive of these gentlemen is Mr. C. A. Lundine, who has opened show rooms at 419 Flatbush Avenue, where various examples of decorations in relief and fresco painting are exhibited, the work being executed by himself.

Although dealing extensively in the best grades of wall paper, Mr. Lundine has a decided preference for painted walls, and is determined to prove to the people of Brooklyn that a wall thus decorated can be produced at no greater cost than one decorated with a fine, hand-made paper, with the result of the owner possessing a much more artistic and absolutely individual piece of decorative work.

"The great difficulty with owners of houses," says Mr. Lundine, "is that they prefer to decorate their walls with a piece of common, every-day wall paper rather than pay a little more for work that adds immensely to the value of the building. The majority of house-property owners believe that a gilt paper on the wall and a few gilt lines on the ceiling, with a little hand-painted flower in each corner, is a fit decoration for the best houses. Being usually men who have made their money in commerce, they are naturally disposed to measure the value of dec-

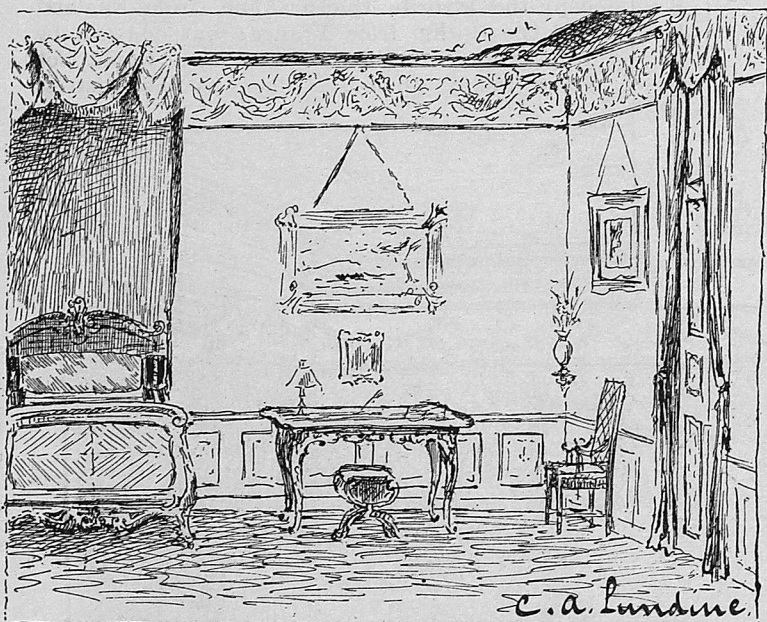


FIG. 1.—A BEDROOM.

orative work by the quantity of material used rather than the sentimental or artistic quality of the finished work. They seem to ignore the value of sentiment in decoration, which is the soul of all art work. Rather than pay me ten dollars extra, I have known men to give the job to a paper-hanging boss, whose work is entirely based on job lot wall paper and the muscles of his henchmen. I have been all my life fighting for the principle of giving artistic merit a chance, and 'art *versus* paste-slinging' has always been my motto. I have always endeavored to educate the public on the value of conscientious and studied work, for a home ought to be so decorated that the brightness, softness and sympathy of the decorations should be the true antidote to the harassing turmoil of commercial life."

Mr. Lundine, in illustration of his ideas, exhibits in several decorative schemes the agreeable effects that can be produced by surfaces being either wholly painted or partly decorated, both with paint and wall papers, or plastic relief of various kinds. He has spent considerable money in fitting up his show rooms in a style calculated to lead decoration out of the rut it has fallen into, through the contract system and the greed of certain house owners. The following is a description of the more notable schemes exhibited:

Fig. 1. is a scheme of decoration suitable for a bedroom. The dado is a piece of lignomur representing an interlacing of carved oak. It is painted a tan color, and the idea of carved oak is still further heightened by having the surface divided into panels by a carved moulding of real oak. The wall is divided into invisible panels, stippled flat with a robin's-egg blue tint, having an outside stiling similarly tinted, but stippled,

to show a lustre. The frieze is a piece of stereo-relief, in which finely moulded female figures seem swimming like mermaids, their draperies blending into the ground, and the whole being decorated in various tones of terra cotta.

Fig. 2. represents the decoration of a library. This scheme

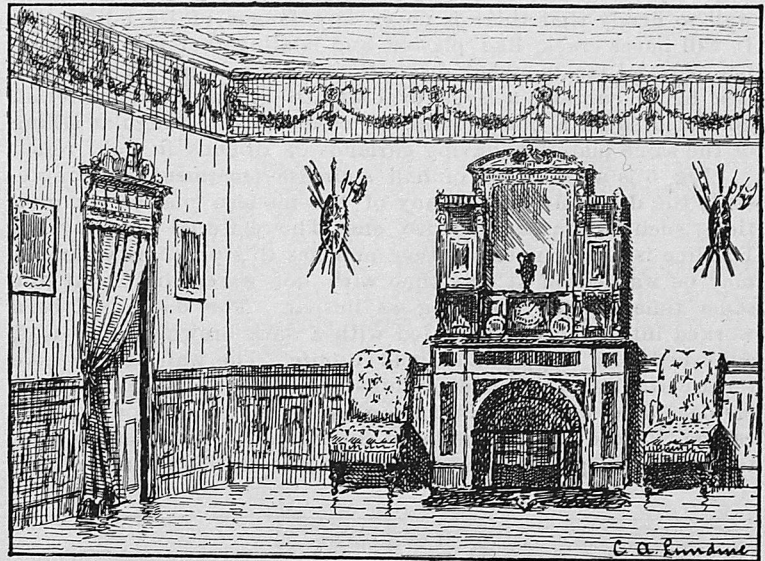


FIG. 2. LIBRARY.

is intended to show the adaptability of lignomur for artistic treatment. The dado is one of the very newest patterns in this popular pressed paper, and consists of a series of rectangular panels, wiped down to represent old ivory. The wall space is covered with a Japanese fish design in lignomur, which is interspersed with waving bands of water, and is painted an ecru tint. The frieze is a heavy moulding of stereo-relief, with heavy swags of fruit, as the design is intended for a dining room. The frieze is entirely covered with old silver bronze, the idea being to represent a piece of hammered iron. Stereo-relief is perhaps the finest of all forms of mechanical modelling, for, being cast in glycerine moulds, it possesses a roundness of form, a depth of shadow, and a sharpness of outline that no form of embossing can ever hope to rival. The ceiling is covered with a piece of lignomur, having a star fish pattern in a blue enamel tint. The border of the panel is a pattern of Moorish interlacing, colored in a tan tint to represent carved oak.

Fig. 3 is a reception room in the Empire style. The dado is composed of a pressed paper having a large poppy pattern, which has been decorated to represent antique golden leather. The high lights have been bronzed and varnished so as to emphasize the moulding of the paper as much as possible. The wall space is covered with one of Leissner's silk brocade papers. The pattern is in the Empire style, and more nearly represents a piece of cream lace on a turquoise blue ground than anything else we

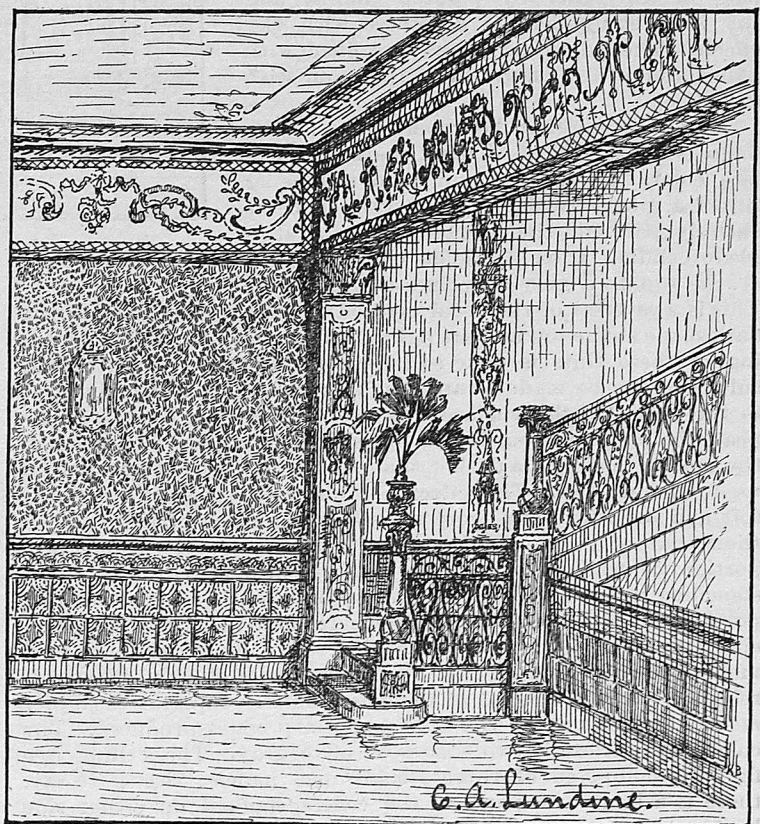


FIG. 5.—HALL AND STAIRCASE.

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can think of. The sheen of silk is, of course, given to the ground of the paper by the use of mica, and the effect is charming in the extreme. The frieze is ornamented with moulded floral wreaths in the Empire style. The substance employed is a species of thick paper pulp, made flexible, we believe, with gum and molasses, and is a new and unique substance, very light to handle, very tough in its nature, and capable of being stuck to the wall so firmly that there is never any danger of its falling off. It will never crack, like plaster, and is altogether a very desirable material for moulded decorations and ceilings. The ceiling (see fig. 4) contains a large oval wreath of the same material, gold colored on a buff ground, enclosed with a rectangular stiling of the same material, having garlands of ribbons in gold relief.

Fig. 5 is an example of hall staircase treatment, and represents the decorative use of any of the modern plaster compositions, such as linspar, plastico, etc. The material used by Mr. Lundine is his own composition, and has this peculiarity, that it may be washed off at any time with hot water, and is at the same time equally enduring as linspar. The dado has been worked into panels and treated with a dark brownish olive tint, enlivened with copper and gold bronze. The wall tint is pale terra cotta, and the frieze contains hand-moulded swags of flowers decorated with gold bronze on a pale pea-green ground. The ceiling, Rococo style. The large square panel in the centre contains a central plaster ornament which was originally an ordinary

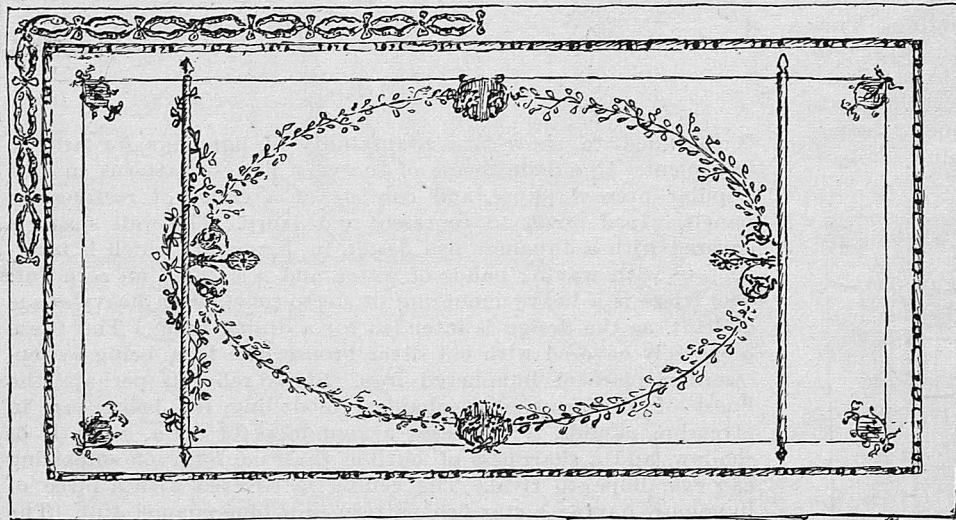


FIG. 4.—CEILING.

circle of stucco, from which depends a graceful chandelier. This ornament has been decorated to represent the under side of a basket of flowers. Through the interwoven strips of gold-colored bamboo are seen the pressed leaves of delicate flowers, and over the upper edge of the basket flowers stray forth. The basket is linked to the four corners of the panel by painted chains, and the intervening field is decorated with sky effects. The adjoining panels are filled with palms and other plants in conjunction with sky effects.

Fig. 6 is another bedroom scheme. The dado is a flat tint of a dark maroon chocolate color, the skirting and dado rail being tinted a gray chocolate. The wall space is entirely painted, the ground being a stippled blending from a violet chocolate tint at the top to a gray chocolate tint beneath. This is a reversal of the usual method of blending, by putting the dark shade at the top and the light shade at the bottom. The blending of these tints is done so imperceptibly that it is with difficulty one can be made aware that there is any blending whatever in the tint. On this surface has been stenciled a *fleur de lis* repeat, this motive being Mr. Lundine's trade-mark. The color of the motive is simply a darker shade of violet chocolate than that used on the wall. The effect of this wall surface is unusually soft and beautiful, and more resembles the sheen of silk damask than that of paint. With each different angle of vision a new portion of wall surface comes brightly into view, showing the stenciling in bold contrast to the ground, while a corresponding portion of the wall surface is elsewhere obliterated and the stenciling lost to view. The frieze consists of an exceedingly bold moulding of scrolls, figures, and garlands of flowers in stereorelief. This new method of relief is infinitely superior to *papier-maché*, on account of the bold and sharp edges produced. The color of the frieze is two shades of olive gray. The ceiling (see fig. 7) is composed of three Renaissance panels; that is to say, there is a large oval panel in the centre, flanked on either side by two smaller panels running crosswise. The borders of these

panels consist of a painted representation of modelled plaster, which is so artistically done that the eye is deceived with the result. One imagines that he is looking at a piece of real plaster decoration. The large central panel is filled with a pictorial scene in oils representing Sculpture and Painting. Figures of several Cupids are seen seated on clouds, some chiseling a bust of Washington, and others painting on a large canvas supported on an easel, which also rests on the clouds.

AMERICAN VERSUS FOREIGN ART.

BY HELEN ANDERSON.

HERE and there in the upper part of New York City, we come across an old Colonial house, that some how, in spite of wind and weather and neglect, holds its own among its aspiring young neighbors. Smiling in a superior manner over the heads of imported Queen Anne toy castles, that poke their shoddy little turrets, and towers, around it, as if it would say: I can afford to overlook their ridiculous airs, for I alone can claim pure blood and style, the rest are a heterogeneous mass of no one knows what, imported from every country under the sun, and alas, too often put together regardless of space, place, or materials.

As these old landmarks disappear, so with them disappears the only purely American style of architecture that we can claim as our own. It seems too bad to lose these old houses, particularly as they are so seldom replaced, and yet, many say: what's the use, when we can copy the favorite Queen Anne, from England and the Gothic from France; but one can be very sure of one thing, that France would not stand to-day where she does, as the mistress

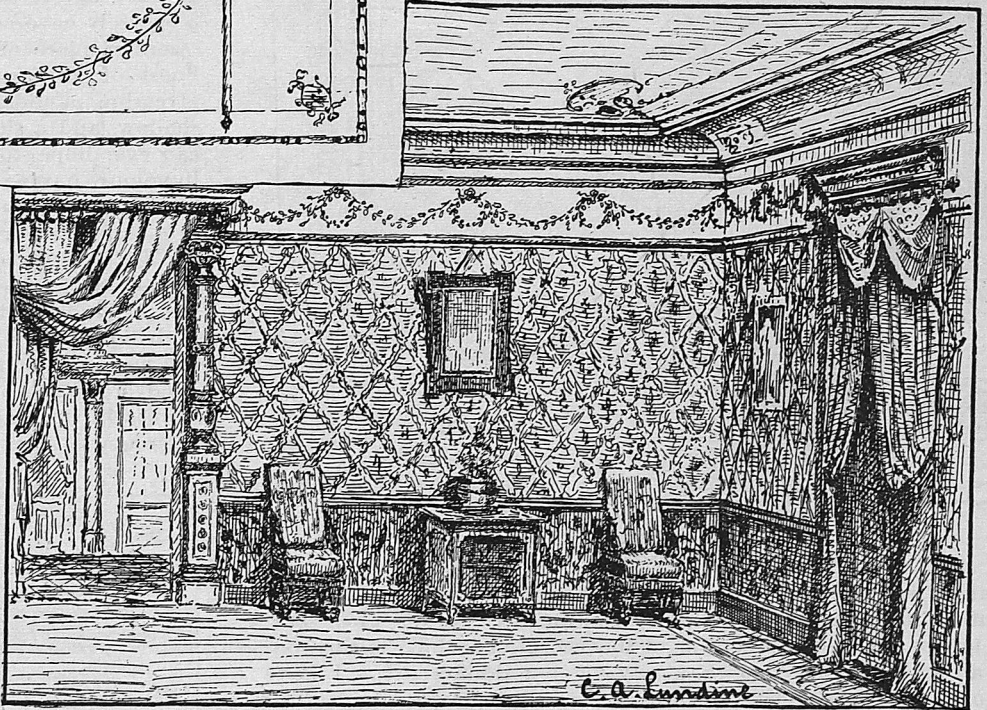


FIG. 3.—RECEPTION ROOM.

of taste for the world, had the French people thrown cold water on their own enterprises at the start. The French people have always had the good sense to be true to themselves and their own country, to patronize home genius, home manufactures, French architecture, French gardening, French painting, French fashions, and as a natural result, each has led the race in turn, because there was no one to discourage, and no one to listen if there had been. We are entirely too apt to disparage every thing that is American, and to *ape* every thing that is foreign; and yet strange to say, we have, as a people, the greatest respect and admiration for the original ideas of every other nation, and no one can say, with truth, that we are not an original people, except of course, a few Anglo maniacs, that can not be judged by the same standard as more fortunately gifted people.

Why can not we follow the same course, refusing to copy anything at all, trusting to our own artistic instincts and feelings to carry us through, and there is no reason that older nations should not in the future be as glad to learn of us in things pertaining to art, as they have done in other things. The French and Chinese permit themselves free liberty, and use

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anything and everything that they can press into the service of decoration regardless of any rule; this can be seen in their silks and chintzes, upon which they do not hesitate to copy flowers and fruits; articles that the creed of the English and American schools of decorative art have forbidden. It was surely by no fixed adherence to the rules and regulations that such men as Bellini, of Venice, owe their genius. As there is no rule or theory that explains how such a thing can be, it is the sudden bound that genius takes out of the ordinary. Had Antonello and many of his brother artists been content to follow blindly the precepts laid out by the older artists, they would never have discovered the secrets that died with them, by the fame of which their names still live. It was to himself, that Antonello owed the discovery of obtaining the bloom of the cheek, the light of the eye, so superior to anything that could be obtained by the use of the more ancient methods.

We read that the gross corruption of architectural science at the period of Henry VIII, was owing to the foreign artists introduced, and it was not until after their day, that art again revived, and at the end of Elizabeth's reign, one can not find a foreign name among the architects of that time. Art, during the time of Henry, was entirely the production of foreign pretenders, for whom Henry, like many good Americans, had a

WHATEVER the severity of modern criticism on French styles at different epochs, criticisms for the most part singularly unjust and taken from extreme examples, those styles possessed leading features, the excellence of which is attested by their continual incorporation in our own furniture. Many of the deprecatory opinions that have passed current, repeated by one writer after another, were really founded on ignorance or arose from the distortion of artistic judgment. The Rococo system of ornamentation was undoubtedly had and subsequent attempts to follow it have only resulted in laughable failures, but it is otherwise the correct furniture of Louis XVI. on which so much ridicule has been poured, and which, with all its concerts finds its type in natural forms in which wood presents an endless variety of curves. Curvatures were not unfrequently introduced for the better display of inlays, such as tortoise shell, etc., the aim being to beautify surface; in short, the decorative effects brought out at the periods when French furniture art established recognized styles, had each its *raison d'être*, though often running to excess in displaying lavish outlay and workmanlike ingenuity rather than taste. With the style of prevailing ebony furniture, it seems to have been forgotten how admirably it was set off by exquisite productions of art in fire gilt brass, and relieved by rich textile hangings and upholstery coverings. Old

French articles of furniture, even as odd pieces, usually make charming additions to our apartments. That there is a singular attractiveness about such furniture in constructiveness and adornment, is shown by the enormous price realized for furniture at the Baron Sellier's art sale, which lately took place in Paris. A Louis XIV. secretary, rosewood, decorated with bronze and plaques of porcelain, brought 45,000 francs; a small screen with four leaves carved, gilded wood and embroidered satin, 15,600 francs; a set of salon furniture, Regence style, of carved wood, with

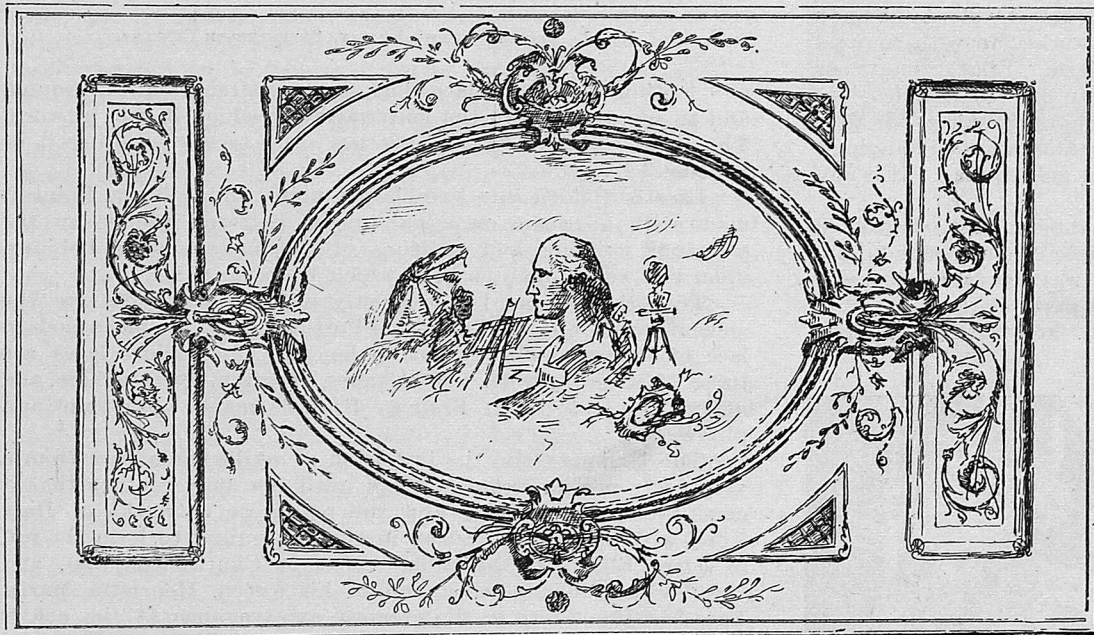


FIG. 7.—BEDROOM CEILING

special weakness, the result seems also not unlike those of the present day, incongruous masses of bricks and plaster.

Inigo Jones made his first mistake when in 1633, he commenced the repairs of St. Paul's Cathedral and in his attempt at restoration he committed some capital errors, as he adopted very bad Gothic, adding a portico of the Corinthian order. This mixture was, of course, out of all harmony as nothing can be more discordant than opposite styles connected in the same building. Imagine, if you can, what a continual discord we must live in, for who can distinguish the different styles often connected in one small dwelling.

The time can not come too quickly when Americans shall cease to copy foreign arts and styles, when they shall stand upon their own feet, becoming no longer pupils but teachers, founding for themselves a new school which shall be, not French, not English, but American. Older nations will respect our individuality when we are no longer ashamed of it ourselves. If intelligent public-spirited citizens who besides the real liking that they may have for art, have also an interest in the part that America has to play in the future, would only realize that the only way to encourage the true growth of any form of art, is to set our artists at some real work which shall be paid for and which shall be worth paying for when we can bring about such a state of affairs, we shall no longer need to go abroad for arts that can be produced at home.

AN effective means of preventing the tarnishing of silverware by exposure to the air or from sulphur fumes liberated by heat is by painting it with a little soft brush dipped in alcohol in which some collodion has been dissolved. The liquid dries immediately and forms a thin transparent and absolutely invisible protection. It can be removed at any time by dipping the article in hot water,

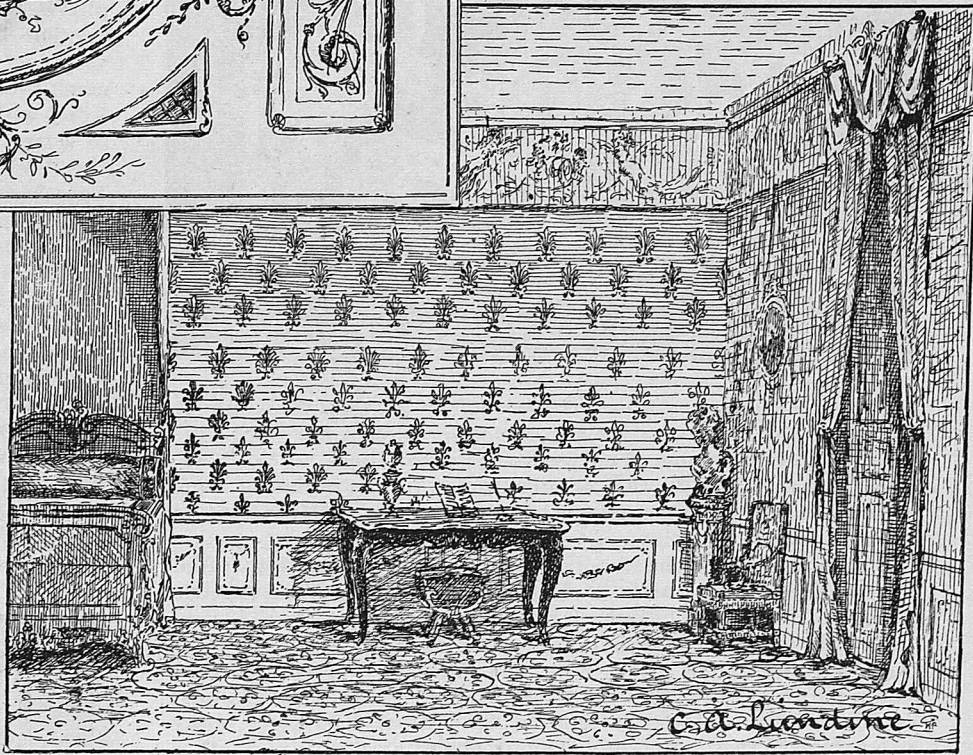


FIG. 6.—A BEDROOM.

rich tapestry, consisting of five large arm chairs and sofa, 13,000 francs, and a set of salon furniture of carved and gilt wood, and upholstered in Beauvais tapestry, consisting of six arm chairs and two sofas, 93,000 francs. It is evident that furniture bringing such prices must have presented admirable combinations.

AN EXCELLENT wax finish for furniture, by cutting beeswax in spirits of turpentine in any proportion so as to make a paste. An excess of turpentine will reduce the gloss. The paste, having been rubbed in, is gone over with a ball of raw cotton wool, moistened with a few drops of sweet oil. The work is then cleaned of the oil by strewing over it powdered starch or flour, rubbed on with a silk handkerchief slightly moistened with alcohol. A good effect may be produced by introducing the contrast of a polished panel with mouldings and stiles in dead or mat finish.